

21 August 2018

The General Manager  
Camden Council  
P O Box 183  
CAMDEN NSW 2570

ATTENTION: MR J T DAVIES, SENIOR TOWN PLANNER

Dear Sir

DA 2018/765/1  
MAGDALENE CATHOLIC HIGH, 1 SEDGEWICK STREET, SMEATON GRANGE

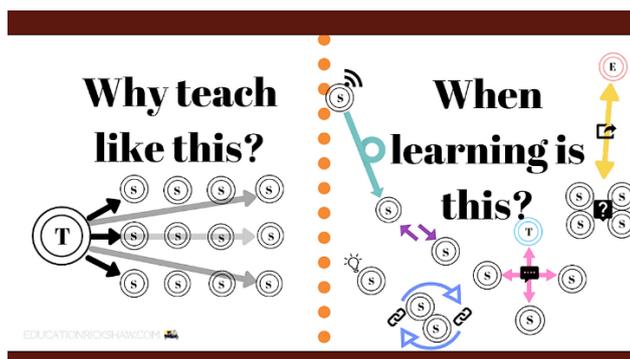
I refer to your letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> August 2018 and submit the following response for your consideration:

**Response to Point 1 - Information Regarding Parking**

Your letter states “The submitted Traffic Report concludes that no additional parking need be provided based on the school not increasing the capacity of students or staff”. You then note that this is based on the perception that the additional floor area must result in increased student numbers. This response emphasises that the conclusion of the submitted Traffic Report is correct and that your assumption that increased floor space equals increased student numbers is incorrect. The following reasons are provided for your consideration:

The Introduction to the Architectural Design Statement submitted with the DA (also attached with this letter) commences with the definitive objective of this project: *This project resulted from the school’s desire to provide new teaching and learning spaces that reflect current curriculum/ pedagogy and reflect the principles in the Design Quality Principles under Schedule 4 of the SEPP. The recent changes to the schools teaching and learning practices have resulted in less need for existing ‘traditional’ specialist spaces and a need offer more flexibility in timetabling.*

This is a characteristic that is currently driving all the changes in education. The upgrade of existing facilities to current standards is one of the main reasons why there is such a recent boom in school building construction. The principle is more clearly described in the following caption:



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The teaching principle indicated on the left-hand side of the diagram above is that of a *traditional classroom*. 30 students can be accommodated in a single room of area 55-60m<sup>2</sup> with a single point of focus (*teacher and whiteboard*). The teaching principle indicated on the right-hand side reflects the opportunities presented by current technology and educational research in being able to teach to the *individual* as opposed to the *average* student ability. The resultant spaces need to be larger and research has found, requires more area/student – 3m<sup>2</sup> instead of 2m<sup>2</sup>/student. Furthermore, the teaching spaces work best in accommodating 60 students in the collaborative learning setting with multiple points of focus (*teachers, whiteboards, LED screens, etc*), usually one for every four students. As a result, new schools no longer have general learning in predominantly *traditional classrooms* and corridors.

Another development in education that has taken place since the completion of Magdalene College in the early 2000's has been the amplification and diversification of curriculum and subject opportunities available to students – in many ways, a result of the tremendous advances in technology amongst other reasons.

Your examination of the teaching facilities at Magdalene will reveal that planning is a combination of specialist facilities for Science, Food & Materials Technology, Art & Performing Arts, plus general learning spaces in 39 *traditional 60m<sup>2</sup> classrooms*. The *traditional classrooms* are not subject based with the rooms being able to be used for many teaching disciplines – Languages, Maths, History, etc.

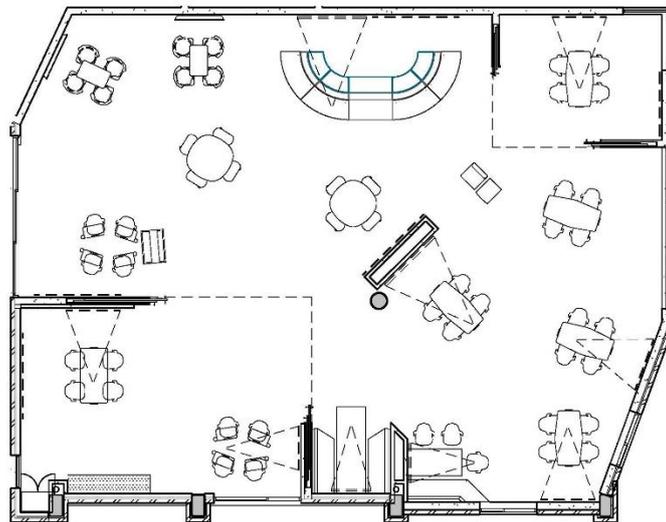
This project has been driven by the educational need to bring the general learning spaces up to current standards. The planning studies for this project revealed that the existing facilities present a shortfall in areas required to satisfy current Curriculum, Teaching and Learning practices. In modern schools, general learning now takes place in a combination of *traditional* and *collaborative* facilities. The resultant design at Magdalene College could have presented itself as a major internal alteration to the existing facilities together with a smaller extension. As you can imagine, the disruption to existing teaching and learning with the need to provide extensive and expensive temporary *dismountable* facilities during construction would have had a major detrimental impact on the operation of the school during construction.

However, studies also revealed that the equivalent cost of construction could be provided in larger, purpose built new facilities. The *traditional classrooms* are still required amongst other reasons, for subjects such as those that only attract small groups (*high level maths, English, etc*) plus being able to cater for the amplification and diversification of curriculum and subject opportunities that have arisen since the completion of the original school. The new facilities will present the school with the unique opportunity to allocate general teaching spaces for specific subject purposes – a luxury that all schools would wish for as the multi-use of general learning spaces is universally recognised for its inefficiency.

The School is also in the fortunate position of having ample land area with which to consider planning options, thus enabling it to be able to consider the planning solution, as proposed with the DA, to provide new facilities to supplement and consequently improve the existing. The upgrade of school facilities to reflect current educational standards and opportunities have recently been completed by this Practice in schools within the District at St Paul's Primary School, Camden and Mary Immaculate Primary, Eagle Vale. Those two schools did not have the luxury of land area to be able to consider the very desirable option proposed at Magdalene High, with each of them needing to demolish existing facilities in order to provide new and updated facilities at the sites.

Unfortunately, the Educational Authorities who assess schools are still in the era of evaluating schools as a combination of specialist learning facilities plus general learning spaces. General learning spaces must be presented as an equivalent of traditional rooms – as shown on the DA. However, the large floor plate is deliberate because it will enable design development to reflect teaching and learning as noted in Section 6 of the Architect's Design Statement submitted with the DA: "*The internal floor plate has been designed to allow for the re-configuration of spaces through the use of glazed operable walls which divide the individual learning spaces from each other and also all the spaces to open out onto student movement/circulation areas*".

The design development will examine and refine internal planning opportunities with the School once the DA process plus Government funding is confirmed. The design development will not affect the size nor appearance of the new facility. The first plan and image below indicate a concept of typical new collaborative general learning spaces which accommodate 60 students – now referred to as *Inquiry Hubs* - which have been developed for other schools. They are the precedents for the educational philosophy for upgraded teaching and learning at Magdalene High. The second plan below illustrates a typical opportunity for Collaborative Learning Settings in the new general learning spaces proposed for Magdalene High.



*St Luke's Catholic High, Marsden Park – Typical Inquiry Hub for 60 students (180m<sup>2</sup>)*



*Magdalene Catholic High - Typical Opportunity for Collaborative Learning Settings in New General Learning Spaces*

As the definitive objective of this exercise is to bring the educational facilities up to current standards for the existing school population without any thought of increased school population, there is no impact on current car parking arrangements, the nature of which has been in existence for many years without issue in the local precinct. It is therefore submitted that this development should not require any upgrade to parking facilities.

**Response to Point 2 – Unisex Bathrooms**

Council is informed that the toilets as planned for this school reflect current planning for School toilets. There is no differentiation in design of facilities for both boys' and girls' toilets. Each student has an enclosed cubicle for private use. This overcomes bullying considerations, the majority of which invariably takes place in the non-supervisable spaces of traditional toilets and overcomes any concern of students with different levels of maturity sharing communal ablution spaces. The total number of toilets must correspond with the BCA requirements for the student cohort. Invariably the individual schools will nominate cubicles for the exclusive use of boys and girls depending on local demand. The design also reflects other current gender considerations which also now need to be considered. Council's concern for the planning of the toilets as shown on this DA is unwarranted.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further clarification.

**Alleanza Architecture**



**Charles Glanville**  
**Architect**

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